

AB 599 Interagency Task Force (ITF) Kick-off Meeting

**Thursday January 24, 2002
Cal/EPA Headquarters Building
Sacramento, CA**

ATTENDEES

ITF Members:

Al Vargas, CDFA
Steve Shaefer, CDFA
Gary Yamamoto, DHS
John Troiano, DPR
Joe Marade, DPR
Dan Gallagher, DTSC
Carl Hauge, DWR
Doug Osugi, DWR
Angela Schroeter, SWRCB
Lisa Babcock, SWRCB

Interested Parties:

Barbara Evoy, SWRCB
James Giannopoulos, SWRCB
John Borkovich, SWRCB
Brett Wyckoff, SWRCB
Robert Howd, OEHHA
Neil Dubrovsky, USGS
Steve Ekstrom, The Results Group

I. AB 599 Overview

SWRCB staff delivered a presentation on the general requirements of Assembly Bill 599. The presentation included details on the Interagency Task Force (ITF) and Public Advisory Committee (PAC). The goal of AB 599 is to improve comprehensive groundwater monitoring and increase the availability to the public of information about groundwater quality. A major requirement of AB 599 is for the SWRCB, in coordination with the ITF and PAC, to submit to the Governor and Legislature, on or before March 1, 2003, a report that includes a description of a comprehensive groundwater quality monitoring program for the state. The SWRCB plans to contract with the USGS to develop a comprehensive technical groundwater monitoring plan to serve as the foundation for the Report to the Legislature.

ITF Comments included:

- The AB 599 report needs to be clear that what is presented in the report is recommendations and not regulations.
- The ITF discussed how to identify AB 599 interested parties. It was noted that several interested parties responded to the development of AB 599 and that those organizations were on the AB 599 Interested Parties list. To establish the PAC, the SWRCB asked umbrella organizations, like the Association of California Water Agencies, to nominate individuals to fill the specific category identified in AB 599. In addition, the SWRCB hoped that these umbrella organizations to help keep their members updated on the AB 599. The ITF was asked to identify any additional potential interested parties to the SWRCB. It was suggested that California League of Food Processors be added to the AB

599 Interested Parties list. The question was brought up as to whether press releases should be issued to announce PAC meetings. It was noted that the PAC should decide how they would like to interact with the public.

- The group recognized that the ITF and PAC would need sufficient time to review the plan. It was suggested a Website could be used for comment and review of draft versions of the plan/report and for posting answers to frequently asked questions.
- The ITF and USGS agreed to address the definition of groundwater monitoring. USGS would use that definition in the development of the comprehensive groundwater monitoring plan. Contents of a groundwater monitoring plan includes issues regarding constituents and frequency of monitoring. It was noted that it would be good idea to address data quality and criteria for using specific groundwater data.
- The ITF discussed whether other states in the U.S. have done a comprehensive groundwater monitoring plan. It was stated that GAMA, in the process of preparing the 2000 Report to Legislature, did not find any other statewide comprehensive plans.

Action Items:

1. Add future meeting agenda item to define groundwater monitoring and objectives of a comprehensive monitoring plan.
2. SWRCB will transmit 2000 Report to the Legislature to ITF members so that they may review definitions of monitoring (see surface water sections) and initial objectives of the Groundwater Ambient Monitoring And Assessment Program (GAMA).
3. ITF members will identify additional AB 599 interested parties.

II. GAMA Program Overview

SWRCB staff delivered a presentation on the Groundwater Ambient Monitoring and Assessment Program (GAMA). The AB 599 effort will build upon existing groundwater programs, such as GAMA. The presentation included details on the California Aquifer Susceptibility (CAS) Assessment, which addresses public supply wells, and the Voluntary Domestic Well Assessment Project, which addresses private domestic wells. The primary goal of the GAMA Program is to assess the water quality and relative susceptibility of groundwater resources in California, especially those used as a drinking water supply. It was also noted that in the 2000 Report to the Legislature (Plan for Implementing A Comprehensive Program for Monitoring Ambient Surface and Groundwater Quality) that the strategy is to take advantage of existing groundwater data resources and to identify data gaps. Currently, GAMA Program data is managed on the Groundwater Resources Information Database (GRID) that uses sophisticated analytical tools and online access developed for Geotracker. SWRCB staff hope to populate the GRID through information sharing between agencies. It was also noted that SWRCB staff is also conducting technical data and literature reviews for a specific set of constituents of concern (COC). It was requested that the following constituents of concern be added to the GAMA COC list: Vanadium and 1,2,3 Trichloropropane.

ITF Comments included:

- A demonstration of Geotracker would be a good idea to present at PAC/ITF Meeting.
- With regard to the CAS Assessment, SWRCB staff noted that they are interested in identifying good tracers to assess groundwater vulnerability.
- DBCP may be a good tracer. However, DBCP in groundwater may not have a source immediately above in the soil. In other words, a pesticide vulnerable area may not be an accurate indication of the location of contaminating activity
- Groundwater programs and data existing at the various groundwater agencies was also discussed. It was noted that OEHHA does not monitor groundwater, only fish and people. DPR has significant amounts of groundwater data that may be of use to the GAMA Program and AB 599. DHS groundwater recharge projects database may be of use to the GAMA Program and AB 599. The ITF agreed that the effort must incorporate the use of existing data and geographic information systems (GIS).

Action Items:

4. ITF members will complete the groundwater program/data list and make a brief summary at the upcoming PAC meeting that identifies existing groundwater programs and data at the various state groundwater agencies.
5. Add vanadium and 1,2,3 TCP to the GAMA COC list.
6. ITF members will identify contacts at their respective agencies who may serve as technical experts on various COCs.
7. DPR will transmit groundwater data to SWRCB.
8. SWRCB will request copy of groundwater recharge projects list from DHS.

III. Comprehensive Groundwater Monitoring Plan

Neil Dubrovsky, of the USGS, delivered a presentation on the proposed concept/scope for a comprehensive groundwater monitoring plan. In general, the USGS proposal contained elements to address California groundwater quality by developing a plan that was based upon the basic hydrogeologic characteristics and associated monitoring needs for the principal aquifers (Coastal Basins, Central Valley, Desert, Inland Basins, and Volcanics). Critical data to evaluate would include water levels, water quality, and well construction. The next step proposed would be to demonstrate the conceptual model by taking a detailed look at existing data (such as the DHS data) for 2 specific areas for a small set of surrogate constituents (for example, nitrates or arsenic). The group noted that nitrate in groundwater is a complex issue and may be difficult to use as a surrogate. The group also noted that the plan should address natural sources of contaminants.

The ITF reiterated that there must be a good definition of monitoring and the objectives of a comprehensive monitoring plan. In addition, it was stated that we need to clarify what is expected for the product. The group acknowledged that developing a detailed plan for the entire state is a difficult task in the given timeframe. It was noted that there are various levels of scale that could be used to approach the task. The ITF agreed that the complexities of the California's hydrogeology should be discussed in the report. In addition, the ITF agreed that any plan should build upon existing groundwater monitoring data.

It was stated that various groundwater monitoring alternatives (at various levels of scale) should be presented to the Public Advisory Committee (PAC). For example: 1) Utilize a standard groundwater monitoring network design over the entire state, i.e. one monitoring point every 2 square miles, 2) Augment existing monitoring points, such as the DHS public supply wells, in prioritized areas, and 3) Monitor a random subset of existing monitoring points. It was pointed out that all alternatives should make use of existing data.

IV. ITF Brainstorming

This intent of this agenda item was to discuss priority groundwater issues and existing groundwater data. The ITF felt they had covered considerable ground.

V. Future Activities

Steve Ekstrom, the AB 599 PAC Facilitator, discussed a draft outline for the PAC Meeting (2/27/02) agenda. Tentative agenda items include: Opening by Assembly Member Liu and SWRCB Board Member, Orientation to AB 599, Committee operating procedures, ITF presentations on existing data, Comprehensive Plan approaches, and PAC discussion on priority groundwater issues.

Meeting Adjourned at 3:30 PM.